

March 30, 1983

LB 565, 142A, 343A

Mr. President, there will be a Public Works Executive Session tomorrow morning at 8:45 underneath the north balcony.

New A bills. 122A by Senator DeCamp. (Read title for the first time.) 343A by Senator DeCamp. (Read title for the first time.) (See page 1279 of the Journal.)

Mr. President, the next amendment I have to the bill is offered by Senator Hoagland. (Read the Hoagland amendment as found on page 1279 of the Legislative Journal.)

PRESIDENT: Senator Hoagland.

SENATOR HOAGLAND: Mr. President and colleagues, I will be brief. This is a compromise we have all been looking for. This takes out of the bill completely telephone calls and lists of telephone calls. Now I think it is very difficult to quarrel with Senator Johnson's logic concerning correspondence and memoranda. It is pretty difficult to misuse a letter or misuse a memoranda, but as Senator Cullan has said, as others and as I said earlier, it is clearly quite easy to misuse the national and international WATTS lines access that we have here at the State Capitol. I think once again we are sending a message to the people of Nebraska that we have something to hide when we pass a bill as broadly drafted as this. Now I have no problem with our fine-tuning this so that we are protecting the disclosure of phone conversations that, in fact, are pursuant to some unusually sensitive topic. But to give us a blanket exclusion of all telephone calls with the discretion being vested completely with us as to whether we want to disclose those or not, I think is a serious policy mistake. Now let me add one comment. This is not the right of the media we are protecting. This is the right of the people of the State of Nebraska. You know, I am constantly surprised at how all of these bills come along that deal with drunk driving, that deal with the disclosure of records, deal with all kinds of things, that give people an excuse to start lambasting the media. Now, granted the media generally does have the last word, at least when it comes to writing newspaper articles, but when we discuss policy issues on the floor of the Legislature in front of our Cable television cameras, the media does not have the last word, and the representatives of the media that may have testified at a public hearing cannot come in here and defend themselves. So I don't think it is good public policy for us to just whenever a bill comes along that somehow or other affects the rights of the media just to take a poke at them. In this kind of a piece of legislation the media is simply representing the